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## **Eliezer**

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## Elienai

If the MT (*ʿĒlīʿenay*) is correct, the name may be explained etymologically as, "God/El is my Eyes," that is, "God/El is My Sight." Elienai is mentioned in 1 Chr 8:20 as the son of Shimei. As such, he is a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin. The Chronicler notes that he was one of the chiefs of his tribe and that he lived in Jerusalem. In the LXX, he is called Ελιωναι which suggests either a Hebrew *Vorlage* that lacks the internal *Yōd-mater* or a graphic confusion of *Wāw* and *Yōd*. Jerome similarly renders the name as Helioenai. If so, the name may be explained etymology as meaning, "God/El is the One Who Answers Me."

Adam Stokes

## Eliezer

### 1. Of Damascus

According to Jewish and Christian tradition, Eliezer of Damascus was Abraham's chief servant, who received some attention in later legends and paintings. The textual basis for this name in the HB is, however, weak. See "Eliezer of Damascus".

Thomas Römer

### 2. Son of Moses

Eliezer (MT *ʿĒlīʿezer*, lit. "my God is help" or "El is help" [Rechenmacher: 28]) is the name of one of Moses' and Zipporah's sons (1 Chr 23:15). His name is first mentioned in Exod 18:4 in connection with Moses' statement that "the God of my father was my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." Eliezer's son was Rehabiah (1 Chr 23:17; 26:25). In the LXX the name is transliterated Ελιεζερ, but Josephus uses Ελεαζαρ (*Ant.* 2.277), thus confusing him with Eleazar. Given the similarity of the two names, it has been suggested that the clan of Eliezer/Eleazar was split between the descendants of Moses and Aaron. A Jewish tradition holds that since Moses had delayed to circumcise his son Eliezer, the circumcision was performed by his wife, Zipporah (the incident narrated in Exod 4:24–26, which does not mention the name of Moses' son, is explained in this way; see *ShemR* 5.8); according to this tradition, Moses had made an agreement with Jethro, his father-in-law, to circumcise only one of his sons (Chasidah: 90).

**Bibliography:** ■ Chasidah, Y., "Eliezer son of Moses," *Encyclopedia of Biblical Personalities* (New York/Jerusalem 1994) 90. ■ Propp, W. H., "Eleazar," *ABD* 2 (New York 1992) 432–33.

### 3. Son of Becher

Eliezer is the name of a Benjaminite and one of nine sons of Becher, whose "enrollment by genealogies, according to their generations, as heads of

their ancestral houses, mighty warriors, was twenty thousand two hundred" (1 Chr 7:8–9).

### 4. Priestly Trumpeter

Eliezer was one of the seven priestly trumpeters who, according to the Chronistic account of the ark, ushered the ark of God into Jerusalem (1 Chr 15:24). The older narrative in 2 Sam 6 does not mention those names.

### 5. Son of Zichri

Eliezer son of Zichri was a chief officer over the tribe of Reuben (1 Chr 27:16). He is mentioned in a list with the names of 13 tribal officers (27:16–22). This list opens with the Reubenites because of his status as firstborn.

**Bibliography:** ■ Knoppers, G., *1 Chronicles 10–29* (AB 12A; New York 2004). [Esp. 896]

### 6. Son of Dodavahu

Eliezer was a son of Dodavahu of Mareshah, a town located in Judah. When King Jehoshaphat of Judah joined with King Ahaziah of Israel in building ships, Eliezer – according to the book of Chronicles – prophesied against the former, predicting that God would destroy the ships they had built. And so it happened (2 Chr 20:35–37). The episode of Eliezer is not mentioned in the parallel account in 1 Kgs 22:48 (MT 22:49). It has therefore been argued that Eliezer is a literary fiction created by the Chronicler to explain the failure of Jehoshaphat's maritime venture. Likewise, Josephus does not mention him; he attributes the reason for the loss of the ships to their size (*Ant.* 9.17).

**Bibliography:** ■ Dempster, S. G., "Dodavahu," *ABD* 2 (New York 1992) 219–20. ■ Japhet, S., *I & II Chronicles* (OTL; London 1993). [Esp. 802–3]

### 7. Messenger of Ezra

Eliezer was part of an embassy sent by Ezra to Iddo, a Jewish community leader in the temple enclave at Casiphia, Babylon (Ezra 8:16–20; LXX 1 Esd 8:43 Ελεαζαρ). This group solicited Iddo successfully for Levitical personnel necessary for Ezra's temple reforms in Jerusalem.

**Bibliography:** ■ Herion, G. A., "Casiphia," *ABD* 1 (New York 1992) 877. ■ Wright, J. W., "Iddo," *ABD* 3 (New York 1992) 375–76.

### 8. Priest with a Foreign Wife

Eliezer is the name of a descendant of Jeshua son of Jozadak during the time of Ezra (Ezra 10:18; LXX 1 Esd 9:19 has Ελεαζαρ). He belongs to the list of priests who had married foreign women (Ezra 10:18–44). Eliezer and his kinsmen pledged to send away their wives, and they each presented a guilt-offering (Ezra 10:19).

### 9. Levite with a Foreign Wife

Eliezer is the name of a Levite who had married a foreign woman during the time of Ezra (Ezra 10:23; LXX 1 Esd 9:23 has Ἰωαννας).

### 10. Israelite with a Foreign Wife

Eliezer, a contemporary of Ezra, was an Israelite and descendant of Harim (Ezra 10:31; LXX Ελ-ιεζε; 1 Esd 9:32 has Ελιωνας). He is one of those mentioned as having married foreign women.

Samuel Arnet

### 11. Son of Jorim

The only NT Eliezer appears in Luke's genealogy of Jesus' ancestors (Luke 3:29). He is listed as the father of an otherwise unknown Joshua and son of an otherwise unknown Jorim.

Dale C. Allison, Jr.

## Eliezer ben Elijah ha-Rofe Ashkenazi

Eliezer Ashkenazi (1513–1586) was educated in the yeshiva of Joseph Taitazak in Salonika. After leaving Salonika in 1539, he served as a rabbi successively in Fustat, Famagusta, Venice, Prague, Cremona, and several communities in Poland.

During his lifetime, Ashkenazi was renowned as a Jewish legal authority. His contribution to biblical interpretation comprises three works: commentaries on Esther and on the narrative portions of the Torah, respectively; and a supercommentary on Ramban (Nahmanides) that is no longer extant.

The Esther commentary, entitled *Yosef legah*, was completed in 1576 and published in Cremona the same year. The introduction includes a fulsome dedication to the eminent Court Jew, Don Joseph Nasi, whom Ashkenazi likens to the biblical courtiers Joseph and Mordecai.

Ashkenazi's Torah commentary, *Ma'asei 'Adonay* (the title drawn from Ps 111:2), was completed in Gniezno (Poland) in 1580 and first printed in Venice in 1583. The restriction of the scope of the commentary to narrative was innovative, the four parts taking up in sequence the biblical prehistory (*Ma'asei Bereshit*), the patriarchal stories (*Ma'asei Avot*), the exodus account (*Ma'asei Mitsrayim*), and everything from Sinai to the death of Moses (*Ma'asei Torah*). *Ma'asei Mitsrayim* occasionally is published separately as a commentary on the Passover Haggadah.

The work reflects two characteristic tensions of 16th-century Jewish commentary, between rationalism and apologetic on the one hand, and between allegiance to tradition and the striving for exegetical novelty on the other. Among many audacious interpretations, perhaps the best known is Ashkenazi's identification of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah (52:13–53:12) with the biblical Job. He argues

that both characters symbolize the present suffering of the Jewish people and their future vindication.

**Bibliography:** ■ Cooper, A., "An Extraordinary Sixteenth-Century Biblical Commentary: Eliezer Ashkenazi on the Song of Moses," in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, vol. 1 (ed. B. Walfish; Haifa 1993) 129–50.

Alan Cooper

## Eliezer of Beaugency

Eliezer of Beaugency was a 12th-century northern French Jewish biblical exegete of the *peshat* school pioneered by Rashi and his students. Little is known of his life, but his exegetical work is regarded in modern scholarship as the climax of the northern French *peshat* method because of his exclusive focus on *peshat* and his reluctance to cite midrash, except to emphasize its minimal exegetical value. Three of his commentaries have been published: on Isaiah (ed. Nutt [1879]), on Ezekiel, and on the Twelve Minor Prophets (published together by Poznanski [1913]). (The Isaiah and Ezekiel commentaries are included in the recent *Miqra'ot gedolot Ha-Keter*). Fragments of his Job commentary are extant, and it seems that he also wrote commentaries on the Torah, Jeremiah, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Daniel – as indicated by his own cross-references and citations by later authors. Eliezer's chief sources are the three great pioneers of the northern French *peshat* school: Rashi, Joseph Qara, and Rashbam (Samuel ben Meir, Rashi's grandson, who is cited by name in Eliezer's *Comm. on Isa* 33:24, and who is believed by some scholars to have been his teacher). But he also cites the *Sefer Josippon* (a popular medieval chronicle of ancient Jewish history attributed to Josephus), the liturgical poetry of Eleazar ha-Qalir, and the lexicographic work of the 10th-century linguist Menahem ben Saruq. Parallels with Abraham Ibn Ezra may indicate that Eliezer knew his commentaries as well – which would be significant because they exemplify the methods of the Andalusian Judeo-Arabic interpretive tradition, of which earlier northern French *peshat* exegetes were unaware.

Eliezer's *peshat* approach is characterized by eight distinct yet inter-connected principles, some of which are refinements or applications of methodologies introduced by Rashi, Qara, and Rashbam:

(1) An insistence on seeking the interpretation of the biblical text from within Scripture itself, rather than relying on midrashic tradition (first formulated by Joseph Qara in his commentary on 1 Sam 1:17). Hence Eliezer's catchphrase, "Scripture has informed you ..." (*hodi'akha ha-katuv ...*), typically used as an introduction to the resolution of an issue open to interpretation.

(2) Consistent reliance on the surrounding literary context to interpret any given biblical passage –